

LIFE OF ST. GERARD MAJELLA

V. REV. J. MAGNIER, C. S. R.



SAINT GERARD MAJELLA.

Life, Virtues and Miracles

OR

St. Gerard Majella

Redemptorist Lay-Brother.

The Wonder-Worker of Our Days.

The Patron of a Good Confession.

Written Specially for the Canonization,

BY

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All the facts related in this short Life of Saint Gerard are given at length in the Italian *Vita de San Gerardo Majella*, by Rev. Fr. C. Benedetti, C. SS. R., Postulator of the Cause of his Canonization, Rome, 1904. The Six Miracles approved of by Holy Church are given, with all the details, in that same Life. The others founded on the declaration of trustworthy persons.

The Author claims no other belief for the Miracles herein related, and not yet approved by the Holy See, than that usually given to human history.

ST. GERARD MAJELLA.

I.—HIS LIFE.

We began our Life of BLESSED GERARD with the words of Leo. XIII., who called him "one of those angelic youths whom God has given to the world as models to men." On the 15th of August, 1904, our Holy Father, Pius X., approved of two Decrees, both necessary for the solemn Decree of his canonization, in the first of which we read:—"*The weak things of the world God has chosen that He may confound the strong.*" Hence we can see in the Kingdom of God, which is the Church, that the grace of mature sanctity is often conferred on the young, the weak, the humble, and the simple and uneducated. Amongst the other examples of this which can be brought forward, a most excellent one is supplied by

the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, which in its early years had been made very illustrious especially by two wonderful men, *having different gifts according to the grace which was given to them*—one the founder of the Congregation and also Doctor of the Church, Alphonsus Maria de Liguori; the other his contemporary and companion, a young man devoted to domestic work, who had no sacred orders, no riches, no human learning, the Venerable Brother Gerard Majella." And the Decree goes on to tell us:—"He was born in the city of Muro on the 6th of April, 1726. As a boy, such was his mature piety, his vehement longing for heavenly things, his admirable desire of mortifying himself for Christ's sake, that when he was scarcely ten years he seemed to rival the ancient hermits in their austerities." These words will prepare the reader for the marvellous life which we are about to sketch.

Muro is some fifty miles south of Naples, a charming spot on a slope of the Appennines. The town has had its great and holy men, but Gerard eclipses them all.

Dominic Majella, a tailor by trade, and Benedicta Galella were the worthy parents of our Saint. The child was baptized the day he was born by the Archpriest of the Cathedral. It seemed as if the grace of the Sacrament had its effect not only on the soul, but on the body of Gerard. He never cried: he was calm and beautiful as a little angel; his infant hand made the Sign of the Cross on his forehead, mouth and breast, and his first words were Jesus and Mary. His mother, on contemplating her treasure, would cry out: "God bless you, my child." As soon as he could walk, she took him to Mass and taught him to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary. He soon learned to go to Mass and make these visits alone. One day, when in his fifth year, while visiting an Altar of the B. Virgin, the Infant Jesus left His Mother's arms, came to little Gerard, played with him, and gave him a loaf of exquisite bread. From that day he frequently received loaves of the same wondrous bread from Jesus and Mary.

When about eight, Gerard was sent to

school. He at once won the affection of his master, Donato Spicci, who used to call him the joy of his heart. He quickly learned to read and write, and his influence for good was so great over the other children that the master would send for him if he were kept at home. One day Gerard took his little schoolmates into a garden. There he formed a religious procession, and got the children to venerate a rustic cross which he made and fixed to a tree. In an instant the tree was enveloped in a most bright light, and the Divine Infant appeared and gave Gerard one of the exquisite loaves.

These divine favors made the little child hunger for the true Bread from Heaven. One day, soon after he began to go to school, no longer able to restrain his desire to receive Our Lord, he presented himself at the Communion rail. For reasons which we can easily imagine, the celebrant passed him over. Gerard returned to his place, and relieved his little heart by shedding an abundance of tears. That very night God sent His Archangel, S. Michael, to give him Holy Communion. And here we

should mention that all his life long he had a great devotion to S. Michael, who gave him in reality his first Communion. Not very long after he was admitted to Holy Communion in the ordinary way. At first he communicated once a week, but his great fervor and his wonderful progress in virtue earned for him the privilege of several Communion in the week.

It is needless to say that Gerard's devotion to the Blessed Virgin was in keeping with his love for her Divine Son. At this early age he recited the Rosary every day, never omitted the three Hail Marys morning and night in honor of Our Lady's immaculate purity, and fasted on Saturdays and on the eves of her Feasts. At twelve he consecrated his virginity to that Blessed Mother who had, as he used to say, "stolen his heart".

About the year 1738 Gerard's father died, leaving to his widow Gerard and his three sisters, Bridget, Anne, and Elizabeth. Owing to their poverty, Gerard was at once apprenticed to a tailor named Martin Pannuto. His master was a good man, and

looked on his apprentice as a saint, and saint indeed he was. This boy of twelve, while plying his needle with his fingers, held his soul united to God by prayer. He fasted, and slept on the floor when he took repose, but often he spent the night in the church adoring Him whom he called *The Prisoner of Love*. He had ecstasies and wrought miracles; but, notwithstanding all this, Pannuto's foreman hated him. Whenever the master was absent, he savagely attacked the boy, struck him, kicked him, and even flung him off the table. The heroic patience of our Saint, who never complained, only irritated the heartless fellow, and there was no peace for Gerard till God so disposed things that the foreman was sent away. It was while he was with Pannuto, on the 25th of June, 1740, that he received the Sacrament of Confirmation, after which he considered himself still more bound to serve Our Lord and suffer for Him. And this leads us to another phase in his life.

The Son of God took the form of a servant for love of us, and Gerard's great

desire was to be like Our Lord. It happened that the Bishop of Lacedogna, who had confirmed him, needed a servant. His Lordship found it hard to get one, for notwithstanding his good qualities he had a very unruly temper. Here was a golden opportunity to suffer, and this alone was sufficient to induce Gerard to become the Bishop's servant. He served him for three years—that is, to his death—bearing without a murmur his harsh words and threats. When urged to leave him, he used to say: "My master is my best friend, and I will never leave him." It was to spare the Bishop annoyance that he asked the Infant Jesus to work a miracle. One day when he went to fetch water, he let the key of his master's apartments fall into the well, which was very deep. He went straight to the church, took from the altar a statue of the Divine Infant, attached a cord to it and let it down into the well, saying: "Little Jesus, give me back the key." When he drew up the statue the key was in its hand. Many witnessed the miracle, and from that day the well was known as *Gerard's Well*.

On the death of the Bishop, in June, 1744, Gerard returned to Muro, and became assistant tailor to Vitus Mennona. In the following year he set up for himself in his mother's house. As he was a good tradesman and very conscientious, customers flocked to him; so that his earnings were good, and, as he spent very little on himself, he could have laid up some money. Instead of this, however, after giving his mother what was necessary for the family, he shared the rest with "*the poor of Jesus Christ*". Thus he used to call the *poor here on earth and the poor souls in Purgatory*. Moreover, he often worked for the poor gratis. Several times every week he had the Holy Sacrifice offered for the suffering souls, and, if on any week there was a falling off in his earnings, his great regret was that he could not have the usual number of Masses said for them. He heard or served Mass every morning, and never let an evening pass without visiting "*the Prisoner of Love*" in the Tabernacle. At this time, also, he gave himself more than ever to works of penance. Accustomed from in-

fancy to fast on bread and water, he now sometimes spent whole days without food. His desire to suffer for Jesus Christ, and as He suffered, became so ardent that he sometimes got others to bind him to a tree and scourge him with cords. And he even induced some companions to suspend him head downwards over smouldering rags. Sometimes in the streets he pretended to be a fool, in order that the boys might treat him roughly. And they granted him his wish. They beat him, pulled him about, flung mud and stones at him; and, whilst they treated him thus, they satisfied a desire of his heart, so often expressed, saying: "*I must suffer something for Jesus, who has suffered so much for me; I must become a fool for the love of Jesus.*"

Thus Gerard had been a great saint from his infancy, and yet he did not feel fully satisfied. He longed for one thing more: to give himself wholly to God in the religious state. Whilst yet an apprentice, and again on his return from Lacedogna, he begged to be admitted into a monastery in Muro, where his uncle was friar. Both

times, owing to his delicate health, he was refused. He then resolved to become a hermit, and drew up for himself a very severe rule; but his confessor soon forbade that kind of life. By these failures God in His providence was leading him to his true vocation.

The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer was founded by S. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori in 1732, and approved by Benedict XIV. in February, 1749. That same year sixteen Fathers came to Muro for a great Mission. When Gerard heard that the special end of this Congregation was that its members should follow as closely as possible the footsteps of Jesus Christ, and labor for the salvation of the most abandoned souls, he felt in his heart a voice which said: "God calls me to be a Redemptorist." He at once made known his project to his confessor, who gave it his hearty approval. He then cast himself at the feet of Father Cafaro, the Superior of the missionaries, and begged to be accepted as a lay brother. As he looked very delicate, the Father refused to receive him.

Gerard, however, persevered, day after day, to the very end of the mission, repeating his request, but without avail. At length the Fathers left Muro for the parish of Rionero. Gerard secretly fled from his home and followed them, leaving on his table a note for his mother to tell her that he had left to *become a Saint*. For some time Father Cafaro persevered in his refusal, but the fervor of the postulant, who threw himself again at his feet and declared that he would beg alms daily at the monastery door until he was accepted, triumphed at last. He sent Gerard to Iliceto with a letter to the Superior, in which—alluding to the postulant's frail constitution—he wrote: "*I send you a useless Brother.*" It was, in the words applied to him by our Holy Father, Pius X.: "God using the weak things of the world to confound the strong."

With this note of introduction Gerard arrived in Iliceto on the 17th of May, 1749. His happiness in finding himself in God's own house is indescribable. He flew rather than walked to the church to thank *the*

Prisoner of Love, and salute His Divine Mother. He was then slightly over twenty-three years of age. It was soon seen that in him the Congregation had gained a great treasure. No *useless* brother was he. God so strengthened his weak frame that the Community used to say: "Gerard can do as much work as three." So great was his fervor that St. Alphonsus shortened his time of probation. He began his novitiate at the end of 1749, and made his profession on the 16th of July, 1752. Besides the four vows taken by every Redemptorist—Poverty, Chastity, Obedience, and Perseverance—Gerard, with the consent of his confessor, took a fifth: *the vow to do always what was most pleasing to God*. This heroic vow, to which he was ever faithful, raised him to a very high degree of perfection, and gave him a place near to St. Teresa and St. Alphonsus himself.

During the six years of his religious life, Gerard performed all the lowly offices of a lay brother. He swept the house, worked in the garden, took care of the refectory, served as cook, infirmarian, tailor, and sac-

ristan. In all he was a bright model of every virtue. His humility was most profound: his obedience was such that St. Alphonsus called him *a miracle of obedience*; and seeing his patience under trial, he did not hesitate to anticipate the decision of Holy Church and declare him *a saint*. We shall treat more at length of his virtues in the next chapter.

It was God's will to exalt this humble lay brother into an apostle, and soon after his profession his apostolic life began. The chief scenes of his labors for souls were Iliceto, Muro, Corato, Castelgrande, Melfi, Lacedogna, Naples, and Caposele. The causes of his frequent journeyings were many. He had often to beg for his Community, which was often in want of the necessaries of life; he frequently had to accompany the Fathers on missions to attend to their wants; his marvellous gifts caused him to be sought for by priests, religious, and even by bishops. On these journeys he wrought the most astounding miracles; human miseries vanished at his word; the beasts of the field, the birds of

the air, the devils of hell, all the laws of nature obeyed his beck: he enlightened the doubtful, confirmed the weak, reconciled enemies, gave fresh courage to those seeking perfection, made known to many the state to which God called them; but, above all, he strove to convert sinners to God. For this sublime work God gave him the wonderful gift of reading men's consciences and knowing sins wilfully concealed in confession. In his life, by Father Dilgskron, are given more than twenty different examples of this marvellous gift. Let us take a few:

One day he went into a shop. The man at the counter began to speak about spiritual things; but Gerard saw into his heart. Calling him aside, he gently reminded him of a mortal sin: "You have knowingly never confessed *that sin*," said Gerard. The man acknowledged that the sin of which Gerard spoke "was known only to God and himself." He at once made a general confession.

Another day he met a gentleman who passed as a good man before the world.

"My friend," said Gerard to him, "you *live in sin*. Do you wish to *die in sin*? Confess that sin which you have so long wilfully concealed, and regain the friendship of God." This man also made a general confession.

"My child," he said one day to a woman, "how can you have peace when you are an enemy of God? Why do you not confess that mortal sin which you have for so many years wilfully concealed?" It was as if a thunderbolt fell at her feet. Gerard inspired her with confidence in the mercy of God, and she, truly penitent, made a general confession.

In the town of Melfi lived Teresa Morante. Outwardly she seemed very holy, and scarcely ever spoke except on holy things. One day she called on Gerard; and, as usual, her conversation became very spiritual. Gerard listened in silence for some time, and then said to her: "My child, why are you such a hypocrite? You know that you have been making sacrilegious confessions for years. Make a good general confession if you do not wish to be

damned." She afterwards publicly declared that she owed her salvation to Gerard.

One day in the year 1745 a young girl came to the door of the monastery at Caposele. She was generally looked upon as a model young woman; but Gerard beheld her soul loaded with sacrilege. Full of compassion for her miseries, he spoke to her very kindly about making a good confession. His words touched her to the heart. She made a general confession and thenceforth led a truly holy life. She ever afterwards spoke of Gerard as an "angel of God sent to deliver her from hell."

Peter de Rubertis was a notary in Muro. He told his wife the following story, which she made known after his death. One day, Gerard meeting him alone, spoke thus: "Sir, your conscience is indeed in a bad state. You will have to make your confessions all over again, telling all your mortal sins from the night when you killed the man who was stealing your cherries and buried him in your orchard. You have never yet told that sin in confession."—Thunderstruck at having his guilty con-

science revealed to him in this way, Rubertis at once made a good general confession of all his sins.

Thus our Saint made known the secret sins, which penitents, through a false shame, because the priests knew them, or through fear of being scolded, had *wilfully* and *sacrilegiously* either concealed altogether or had not confessed sufficiently. When God let him see the pitiable state of souls torn with remorse and deprived of peace, he felt the deepest commiseration for them and hastened to their relief. There was something more than human in his words when he spoke to them; there was a mixture of sweetness and severity which filled the heart with the holy fear of God.

The power of Gerard to help sinners to make a good confession, is as great to-day as in the days of his earthly life. He is ever ready to help the sacrilegious sinner who prays to him. This is why missionaries invoke him in the confessional, and recommend sinners to pray to him for the grace to know and confess their sins. This is why he is recognized as the *great patron of a good confession*.

The wonderful effects of Gerard's apostolate roused the fury of the demon against him. We can give but one example: Our Saint had been at Iliceto from the May of 1749 to February in 1754. During this time many maidens, by his advice and with his help, left the world and consecrated themselves to God. Amongst these was a young woman named Neria Caggiano, for whom Gerard had obtained admission into a convent in the neighboring city of Foggia. She, however, soon returned to the world. To justify her inconstancy she calumniated her benefactor, accusing him of an awful crime. She made her accusation with such ingenuity, that even St. Alphonsus was led to doubt the virtue of the holy brother. So Gerard was summoned to the house of Nocera, where St. Alphonsus was at the time, and, as he uttered not a word in self-defence, he was humbled and punished as if guilty. He was forbidden all intercourse with seculars, deprived of Holy Communion, and sent to the novitiate in Ciorani, where he lay for months under the foul imputation. At length God sent his calum-

niator a serious illness, and her conscience gave her no rest until she got her confessor to make known to St. Alphonsus that: *all she had said about Brother Gerard was untrue and inspired by the devil.* St. Alphonsus' joy can be imagined. Sending at once for Gerard, he said to him: "My son, why did you never utter a single word in defence of your innocence?" "My Father," answered Gerard, "how could I? Does not the rule forbid me to excuse myself when I am blamed?" He might have added, that he had made a personal resolution never to excuse himself, and a vow to do what seemed to him the most perfect. "Well, my son, may God bless you," was the saint's reply. It was the marvellous patience shown in this trial that made St. Alphonsus say: "*Gerard is a great saint.*"

Gerard never returned to Iliceto. At the end of June, 1754, he was sent to Caposele. Soon after we find him at Naples, where he remained with Father Margotta from July to November. It was while in the capital, a wicked woman who dared to tempt him fell dead at his feet. It was then he walked

on the sea and saved a bark from shipwreck. At Christmas he returned to Caposele, where he was appointed to superintend the building of the convent then in course of construction. While thus engaged, our Blessed Lord in the Tabernacle once at least gave him the means of paying the men their wages. One Friday there was no money in the house. The Father-Rector told Gerard of the state of things. "Let us", answered the saint, "offer a petition to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament." The petition was drawn up, and Gerard was commissioned to present it to Jesus. He went up to the Tabernacle, and, laying the petition on the altar, rapped at the door, saying: "Lord, thou seest our petition—we expect a reply." To make sure of a favorable answer, he spent the whole night in prayer. At the break of day he again rapped at the Tabernacle door. He listened for a moment, and heard the porter's bell ring. He went down immediately to the door of the monastery, and there found two small bags full of money. There was more than necessary to pay the men, but not enough

to finish the building. A gatherer of alms was needed. The Father-Rector wished to send Gerard out again to collect, but, owing to the brother's poor health, did not like to ask him. God revealed to Gerard the desire of his Superior, and the holy brother at once offered himself for the work.

He began his journey in July. All the marvels of that journey will never be recorded by the pen of man. The whole creation seemed to obey him. He cured the sick, expelled devils from those possessed, foretold to sinners that their death was at hand, and *continued to make known sins concealed in confession*. But at last he was seized with consumption, and had to be called home to Caposele. He arrived on August 31st, and he looked so wretched that Father Cajone had to make a great effort not to burst into tears. Gerard remarked his emotion, and consoled him, saying: "My dear Father, it is the will of God; therefore let us rejoice, for we should always do God's will with joy." And when the brothers came and wished to condole with him: "Let us be gay, my dear broth-

ers," he said, "let us be gay; for I do only the will of God. I am happy to do God's will, and content to go to unite myself to Him." And when he had been taken to his room and put to bed, he begged that the following inscription might be put on his door: "Here we do the will of God, as God wills and as long as it is pleasing to Him."

The disease made rapid progress. On the 5th of September he received the Holy Viaticum. Father Buonama holding the Sacred Host in his hand, said: "Behold this Lord who is your Father, and who will soon be your Judge: renew, therefore, your faith, and make the proper acts." Gerard reverently and humbly replied: "You know, O my God, that whatever I have done or said, all has been done and said for your glory. I die content in the hope that I never sought anything but your glory and the accomplishment of your most holy will." On the 6th he was to receive Extreme Unction, but early in the morning a letter arrived from his confessor, Father Fiocchi, giving him an obedience to get well. Gerard at once rose from bed to the amazement

and joy of all. He continued to regain strength for the next few weeks. However, in the beginning of October the fever and blood-spitting returned. He often said that if it were not for the obedience he had received, he would have died on the 9th of September, and that his brief recovery was simply God's way of showing the power of obedience. He now foretold the day and even the hour of his death. His weakness gradually became greater, and his sufferings more intense. All through his life one desire was to be like his Crucified Lord, and now his constant meditation was on the sufferings of Jesus. He even prayed that his bed of pain might be for him the wood of the cross, so that he might endure all the sufferings of Our Lord in His death agony. His prayer was heard, and he was able to say: "*I am in the wounds of Jesus and the wounds of Jesus are in me.*" Shortly before he died, in answer to the infirmarian, who asked him if anything troubled him, he said: "*I have done everything for the love of God; I have never lost sight of Him; I have always endeavored to walk in His presence,*

and because I have desired nothing but His holy will, I die in peace."

On the Feast of St. Teresa, October 15th, he received Holy Communion for the last time. He spent the day in recollection and prayer. During the night the devil entered the room and made a last attempt to gain his soul; but Gerard, with the powerful names of Jesus and Mary, drove him away in shame. Mary, his Blessed Mother, then paid him the visit he had always expected. "Behold", he exclaimed, "the Madonna, let us pay her due honor," and then, enraptured with her beauty, he entered into a profound ecstasy. When he came to himself, he fixed his eyes lovingly on a large crucifix and on a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which were before him. He repeated over and over the holy names of Jesus and Mary, made acts of faith, hope, contrition and love, "O my God," he prayed aloud, "I wish to die to give you pleasure, I wish to die to do your most holy will." His loving intercourse with our Blessed Lord and His Most Holy Mother lasted till his innocent soul left his body.

He died, according to Rev. Fr. Camillus Ripoli, from the vehemence of divine love rather than from the consumption of his body; and he died, as he had predicted, almost alone. His Superior, however, was there to give him a last absolution and a last blessing. It was past midnight, and, therefore, the 16th of October, 1755. The delicious odor which had filled his room for several days before his death, now spread through the whole monastery, giving his brethren the sweet assurance that their dear, departed Gerard had entered into the joy of the Lord. He was 29 years 6 months and 9 days of age, and he had lived in the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer 5 years, 5 months and 15 days. "Gerard Majella", says the Decree, already referred to in the beginning of our Life, "died most holily in the town of Caposele, in the 30th year of his age, laden with merits and strengthened in his last moments by the presence of the Virgin Mother of God." He gave a new and assuredly wonderful proof, the Decree goes on to say, of the virtue and pre-eminent sanctity of those

trained in religious orders. Virtue and sanctity, always praised by the Apostolic See, but hated and outraged, especially in our own times, by the impious enemies of the Church. Saint Gerard, pray for us!



II.—VIRTUES OF SAINT GERARD.

We praise God for the marvels of which the life of Saint Gerard is so full, but he is given to us especially as our model. True devotion to a saint leads his client to imitate him. We will, therefore, in this chapter consider briefly some of the virtues of our Saint.

HIS FAITH.—The holy Council of Trent teaches that faith is the foundation of all the supernatural virtues. This prepares us to believe how great must have been the faith of Saint Gerard, since he so excelled in all other virtues. As a child he loved to speak of the truths of our holy religion to his mother at home, and to other children at school. He always walked in the presence of God, and was able to declare on his death-bed, that he never did anything except for His glory, and to do His most holy will. He saw God in his neighbor and in

all his superiors. To him a priest was another Jesus Christ, and one may say that his veneration for each priest was so great that it could not have been greater for our Lord's Vicar on earth, our Holy Father the Pope. He had a great devotion to St. Agnes and to the Forty Martyrs, and he used to beg them to obtain him the grace to die for the faith. He would never listen in silence to anyone who, in his presence, dared to say anything against the Church or her ministers. He constantly grew in faith by repeated acts, and much more by the extraordinary light which God poured into his soul, and by means of which he understood the most profound mysteries of religion, and could speak of them with a correctness and facility which astonished even priests and bishops. Like St. Teresa, the greater mysteries, such as the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, had special charms for him. It was in the name of the Most Adorable Trinity he performed his most stupendous miracles. We see, in his exclamation, how he appreciated this great gift of faith. "My faith is my life," he used to say, "and my

life is my faith. O my God, a man to live without faith! As for me, I wish to be heard all over the world crying out: 'Blessed be the faith we have in our God!' O Lord, I wish to do all that my mother, the Church, orders me to do!"

HIS HOPE.—By hope we constantly expect eternal life and the means necessary to obtain it. This confident expectation is no founded on our own merits, but on the goodness and fidelity of God. As Gerard possessed faith in a most heroic degree, so also did he possess hope. He not only expected heaven, but also a high place therein; he resolved to become a saint.

He overcame every difficulty which stood in the way of his religious vocation, and when he found himself safe in God's house, he repeated again and again: "I wish to become a saint; I wish to become a saint." He wrote: "The opportunity of becoming a saint is offered to me only once; if I miss it, I miss it for ever. Since, then, I have this opportunity of becoming a saint, what is there to prevent me? All my circumstances are favorable to the attaining of holiness. Yes, I wish to be a saint."

Gerard knew that he had at his disposal all the necessary means to become holy, and that he had a good will; but he did not on that account trust to himself. "I shall never", he wrote in one of his resolutions, "count on my own strength. Knowing as I do the depth of my misery, I know not how I could confide in myself, and were I to do so, it would be a sign that I had lost my head. It is in God, and God alone, that I place all my hope. Therefore I have put my whole life into His hands, that He may dispose of me as He pleases. I live indeed, and yet I am without life, since my life is in God: on Him alone do I repose." In this distrust of himself he would turn to our Blessed Lord, begging Him with all the fervor of his soul to aid him to keep his good resolutions. Then he would turn to His Blessed Mother, to the angels and saints, and beg them from the height of heaven to look into the depth of his heart, and there read his resolutions; and then he would pray them to use their influence with God to make him faithful. Gerard was strengthened in his hope by great interior

trials which God sent him. Writing to a religious, he describes himself as one in an ocean of confusion and suspended over the abyss of despair. It seemed to him as if God was no longer for him, that His mercy had come to an end, and that justice alone remained for him. "I am nailed", he wrote, "to the Cross. O, have pity on my agony! Scarcely will my tears let me see these lines. My sufferings are so bitter that I feel the agonies of death." It was sharing in the agony of Our Lord, and, like his Divine Master, he was able to add: "Blessed be the will of God for ever and ever!" In God he placed all his hope.

HIS CHARITY.—By faith we know God, by hope we expect to be with Him one day in heaven, by charity we are united to Him already on earth. How close this divine union was in the case of Saint Gerard is difficult to describe. From his infancy he gave his whole heart to God. He knew no other love, for all whom he loved, he loved in God and for God. It would have been agony to Gerard to have thought that there was a single fibre in his being, a thought in

his mind, or an affection in his heart, which did not belong entirely to God. He could not support that holy souls, whom he directed, should show him the very slightest shadow of affection, lest in the smallest degree he should stand between them and God. God on His part gave Himself to Gerard in a most marvellous manner. We shall find the most manifest expression of his charity in the perfect uniformity of his will with the will of God. In this we can imitate him, and it is in this uniformity that the love of God practically consists.

In his letters to spiritual persons, Saint Gerard always exhorted them to absolute conformity of their wills to the will of God. After pointing out the excellence of this conformity to the Superior of a convent, he added: "Continue, therefore, always in striving to be transformed into this perfect union—that is, to become one and the same thing with the beautiful will of God. It is this the angels do in heaven: let us desire to do it also on earth. The will of God in heaven, the will of God on earth: this is paradise in heaven, paradise on earth."

You are My friends, says Our Lord, if you do what I command you. Saint Gerard kept all the commandments of God, bound himself by vow to observe the counsels, and added a vow by which he obliged himself to do always that which was most pleasing to God, and to do this he was faithful up to his last breath. Nor were trials wanting to him. It is not difficult to unite our will to the will of God when all goes smoothly; it is difficult when all seems to go wrong. Gerard was the same in joy and in suffering, and if he ever expressed a wish it was that he might suffer more and more to give proof of his love.

It will be easy for the reader to call to mind how Saint Gerard loved the Infant Jesus, how he loved Our Lord on the Cross, and how his soul seemed to dwell in the Tabernacle with the *Prisoner of Love*. But there is another test of divine love, which our Blessed Lord applies during life and will apply it again at the General Judgment — that is, love of our neighbor.

HIS LOVE FOR HIS NEIGHBOR. — How can you pretend that you love God whom

you do not see, when you do not love your neighbor whom you see, and who is the image of God. This teaching of the disciple whom Jesus loved was well understood by Saint Gerard. Like our Blessed Lord, he went about doing good. He was looked upon during life, as we look upon him now, as a *wonder-worker*. But why these miracles, which cured so many diseases, which brought consolation to so many homes, which led to the saving and sanctifying of so many souls? In all you have proof of Saint Gerard's love of his neighbor. Space will only let us give a very brief account of his charity. We must confine our remarks to his action at Caposele in the winter of 1754. It was in that year he was appointed porter, and as porter he had charge of the poor. In receiving the keys he said: "O, these are the keys of paradise for me."

The winter began with devastating hail followed by snow. It was cold almost beyond endurance, and the laborers had no work. As many as two hundred famishing creatures came some days to the door. The Rector, Father Cajone, whose heart bled

for these poor people, sent for Gerard and told him that he put them entirely into his hands. He gave him authority, at the same time, to take whatever he could from the common stock for them. It was impossible for a poor Community like that of Caposele to provide for such a multitude, but there were no bounds to Gerard's confidence in God. You may learn from the following how the poor were fed. One day the brother baker came to the cupboard to fetch some bread to the fathers and brothers; not a crumb was to be found—all had been given to the poor. The baker knew not what to do; it was too late to bake again, and there was no possibility of procuring bread. He went to the Rector to complain. Gerard was summoned, and Father Cajone, forgetting for a moment, his own injunction, blamed the porter for his indiscretion. "Fear not, Reverend Father," said the lover of the poor, "God will take care of us," and then, turning to the baker, he said: "My dear brother, let us go and see, perhaps there is still some bread." "No, no," the baker said, "there is none left." Nevertheless,

when they opened the cupboard door, it was full of bread. "Blessed be God for ever!" cried out Gerard, and he ran to the church to thank our Lord. More than once the bread was multiplied in his very hands. Often he would light a great fire near the house that they might warm themselves, and he wept to see them suffer. It was on the occasion of this famine that he was called, and with good reason, *Father of the Poor*.

That nothing might be wanting to prove Gerard's charity, his desire to do good to all did not prevent his having enemies; but the worse they treated him the more he strove to do them good.

HIS OTHER VIRTUES. — Nothing was too good for Christ's poor, nothing too bad for Gerard himself. He desired to have the worst, and as little as possible of the things of this earth. He strove to imitate perfectly the poverty of Jesus Christ. Of his chastity it is written that he was as pure as an angel and spread the odor of purity wherever he went. He consecrated his virginity to his Immaculate Mother when he was twelve, and carried his soul spotless to the Judg-

ment seat of Christ. "Among all the virtues that are dear to Thee, O my Jesus," he would say, "the one that I love with a love of predilection is holy purity. My trust is in Thee, O Infinite Holiness! to guard me from every thought that might tarnish the brightness of my soul." But it was obedience, more than any other virtue, that attracted him to the religious life. He desired to have no will of his own so that all his actions might be in perfect conformity to God's will. St. Alphonsus called him *miracle of regular observance*. And he himself wrote: "O my God and my only Love, to-day and every day I give myself up to Thy good pleasure. . . . I will never cease to raise my eyes to Heaven, there to adore the Divine Hands which cast towards me the precious pearls of Thy most holy Will." He died protesting he had never sought anything but the will of God.

Innocent though he was, he mortified himself incessantly by the hardest labor, and by penance of every kind. He took but little food, shortened his sleep and some nights deprived himself of it altogether.

He scourged himself to blood and covered his body with cilices. It was thus he surrounded the lily of his chastity with the thorns of mortification. He did penance also to make reparation for sin, and to obtain the conversion of sinners which he had so much at heart. "O my God," he would exclaim, "that I were able to convert as many sinners as there are grains of sand under the sea and on the earth; as there are leaves upon the trees, plants in the fields, stars in the heavens, rays from the sun, or atoms in the air." And we know how wonderfully God answered the supplications of his penance and his prayers.

Perhaps that which was most remarkable in Saint Gerard was his humility. The favors which God bestowed on him so abundantly and which made him so great in the eyes of men, only humbled him in his own eyes. Those who lived with him said that Gerard accounted himself the worst and the last of the brothers. He called himself a wretch, a sinner, and a worthless fellow—and he meant it. The Bishop of Melfi wished to converse with him; when Gerard came into

his presence: "O my Lord," he said, "who am I that your Lordship should wish to speak to me? I am a worm of the earth, a sinner, a wretched man who needs all the mercy of God." When he was at Naples some of the first families used to beg a visit from him. The petition was ordinarily made to Father Margotta. One day, however, a servant in rich livery come to the door and informed the porter that the Duchess of Maddaloni requested that Brother Gerard should visit her. The porter was Gerard, and, seeing that the servant did not know him, he said, with a contemptuous smile: "I cannot understand how people always want to see this brother, for he, I must confess, is a blockhead, a half-witted fellow." With this answer he dismissed the servant, who faithfully delivered it to the Duchess, adding that he had it from the lips of the porter. The Duchess concluded that the uncivil porter was the humble servant of God. Her little daughter was seriously ill, and this was why she had wished to see Brother Gerard. She determined to go next morning to the church which the ser-

vant of God ordinarily visited. She was there before him, and as soon as he entered she hastened to him, and with maternal solicitude, implored him to ask God to restore her child to health. Gerard turned towards the Tabernacle, and, pointing, said: "In that Tabernacle the Distributor of favors dwells." "Yes," she replied, "but the Distributor grants favors also through you." Her confidence had touched Gerard, and he promised to pray for the child. She remained in the church to pray, but only a short time had elapsed when a servant came and in great joy informed the Duchess that the child was well and had risen from her bed. She was cured the moment Gerard prayed for her. Gerard loved above all the poor and abandoned, but he knew that the great ones of this world had also their trials, and he would not refuse them consolation.

Our Saint delighted in anything and in everything that humiliated him. Father Fiocchi drove him one day from the parlor of a convent with most opprobrious words, indeed as if he were a demon; but when alone with the religious, he said: "Ah!

how that brother resembles our Divine Master! Truly his face is like the face of Jesus Christ." Gerard had no other ambition but to be like his Divine Master in all things, and especially to learn from Him to be *mEEK and humble of heart*.

HIS PRAYERS AND HIS DEVOTIONS. — Early in life God led this innocent soul in the ways of divine love. His prayer was of the highest order, and, as we have seen, he ever walked in the presence of God. He gave all his spare time when in the world to prayer, and when in religion he would never miss one exercise of piety prescribed by the Rule. He gave all the time at his free disposal to actual prayer, and he turned all his works into prayer by his most pure intention. "My supreme resolution," he said, "is to give all to God." Hence he prayed: "O my God, I have the intention of offering Thee as many acts of love as have ever been made to Thee by the Most Holy Virgin and all the saints in heaven, as well as by the faithful on earth. I would love Thee as much as Jesus Christ loves Thee and as He loved His chosen ones. I would

renew these acts with every beating of my heart." So occupied was he with divine things during his work that he was seen sometimes to be quite absorbed in God. Of his many devotions we cannot speak at length. It will suffice to direct attention to his love for the Crib, the Cross, and the Tabernacle, and to his tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, the angels and saints.

DEVOTION TO OUR LORD.—The servant of God has been sometimes represented having the Divine Child at his side, to remind us of his sweet intercourse with Jesus in the days of his childhood, but he is ordinarily represented either contemplating his crucifix or pressing it to his bosom. Jesus suffering was ever in his mind and in his heart. He carried, as far as was permitted to him, the sufferings of Jesus in his body, and he desired and prayed that he might share in His interior sorrows and desolation. This favor was often granted to him, especially during Holy Week. We have seen that at the end of his life he was able to say: "The wounds of Jesus are in me and I am in the wounds of Jesus."

We may, however, single out as the object of his great devotion, *the Tabernacle*. From his earliest years he was enamored of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament — *The Prisoner of Love*. In the world he assisted at or served as many Masses as possible, got Masses said, and induced others to visit the *Prisoner of Love*. He spent all the time he could spare during the day before the Tabernacle, and frequently got the sacristan to let him pass the whole night in the church. After his entry into religion his relations with Our Lord became so intimate that it seemed as if the Sacramental Veil had been removed, and that he was face to face with the Divine Prisoner. We have seen him place his petition on the altar, and knock at the Tabernacle door, asking Our Lord to grant it. We know not all that happened during the night when he was alone with his Beloved, but in the daytime when work called him elsewhere, he had to make a violent effort to tear himself away. He was seen one day to pass through the Sanctuary with what seemed irreverent haste. When asked why, he answered that it was to

escape the attractions of the *Prisoner of Love* and at the very thought of them he there and then fell into an ecstasy. One day Father Cajone saw him smile as he passed before the Tabernacle. He asked for an explanation. "Our Lord," Gerard replied, "said to me that I was a fool, and I said to him, you are a greater fool to love me so much." What devotion. What intimate union do not these incidents reveal?

HIS DEVOTION TO BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

— We have seen that at twelve he consecrated his virginity to his Immaculate Mother by a vow of perpetual chastity. His enlightened mind, even at that early age, fully understood how dear to Jesus were chaste souls, and he, therefore, hastened to put his chastity in the safe keeping of his heavenly mother. When indiscreet persons spoke to the holy youth about marriage, he would say very decidedly: "My spouse shall indeed be a beautiful woman," referring to Our Lady.

"He loved," says the *Italian Life*, "the Most Blessed Virgin Mary as a son loves the most affectionate of mothers. From the

moment in which he was able to speak he consecrated his tongue to sing her praises and to recite her Rosary. As he grew in years, not satisfied with these, he commenced, especially in preparing for her feasts, to fast and perform other penances. 'But,' to use the words of Father Dilgskron, 'as in the heart of this saintly young man all the virtues had grown in intensity, so had his love for the Blessed Virgin Mary become greater,' and this love led him to an act of most perfect consecration.

"On the 3rd Sunday of May the people of Muro were accustomed to celebrate with great pomp a feast in honor of the Immaculate Conception. Gerard always prepared himself for it with special fervor. At this celebration, in 1747, Gerard was near the statue praying devoutly, when, under the pressure of feelings that he could not control, he felt his heart beat violently, and, as it were, bounding with joy and love. As the statue was about to be carried in solemn procession, an irresistible power seized him, and, more in ecstasy than led in the ordinary way, he pushed his way through the

crowd, and standing before the statue, he took a ring off his finger and endeavored to put it on the finger of the Blessed Virgin, and said with a loud voice: 'Behold me espoused to the Madonna!'

"The feeling of love resulting from this consecration was not a mere transitory one, for it had its roots in that holiness which he had so long cultivated. It accompanied him through life, and showed itself in the perfect purity of his soul and body. Gerard remained free not only from every grievous sin, and carried his baptismal robe unsullied to the grave, but even from lesser defects which pave the way to voluntary venial sin. He was, by special favor, free from the sting of the flesh. 'This was the gift of the Holy Virgin to her virgin client.'" Mary watched over Gerard during life, came to console him at death, and, we may well hope, presented him at judgment to her Divine Son.

The angels and saints were for Gerard great realities: not beings living at a distance, but near and ever ready to help him, for he realized practically the close relations that exist between the Church militant and

the Church triumphant. Amongst his special favorites in the heavenly Jerusalem were St. Michael, St. Agnes, and the Forty Martyrs.

We have already seen his devotion to the souls in purgatory. This had its foundation in his love for Jesus, whose friends the holy souls are, and in their utter inability to help themselves.

EXAMEN OF CONSCIENCE.—*Let us now see in what, and how far, we imitate our Saint:—*

FAITH. — Do I, like Saint Gerard, consider my faith my greatest treasure? Do I love, obey, and serve the Church? Do I reverence as I ought the Priesthood? Do I see in my superiors, and in my neighbor, the person of Jesus Christ?

HOPE. — Do I place all my confidence in God? Do I, according to God's design, make good use of the means of salvation which He gives me, namely, prayer and the Sacraments? Do I detach myself from the things of this world, and bear painfully sufferings and trials in the hope of a never-ending reward?

LOVE OF GOD. — Is God first in my

thoughts? Do I love Him above all things? Do I love all else for Him and in Him? Do I strive in all things to conform my will to the Divine Will? Do I hate sin, and do what I can to prevent sin?

LOVE OF MY NEIGHBOR. — Is my love for my neighbor truly supernatural? and, does it embrace all men, even my enemies? Do I do as much as I can for the poor? Am I mindful of the souls in purgatory?

HUMILITY, PURITY AND MORTIFICATION. — How do I receive humiliations? Do I guard my purity as the apple of my eye? What command have I over my appetite? Do I observe the laws of the Church?

PRAYER AND DEVOTIONS. — How do I pray? Do I honor the Blessed Mother of God? How do I spend the holy season of Christmas? How do I compassionate Our Lord in His Passion? How do I assist at Mass, and how often? How do I make my confessions? How do I profit by my Communions? Do I visit the *Prisoner of Love*?

III.—SAINT GERARD'S MIRACLES.

In the Decree approving of the Miracles for Blessed Gerard's canonization we read: "The fame of his sanctity still clung to him when dead, as did, likewise, the confidence of the people that he would be their most powerful intercessor with God." In the other Decree we find the words: "The memory of such a great man, his sanctity, and the renown of his prodigies, have remained fresh even to our days." Indeed, the difficulty, especially in a short life like this, is to choose from the long catalogue of his miracles. During his lifetime they abounded, and, since his death, every year has been marked by new prodigies. They have not been confined to his native land, but have been wrought in every country. We give, in the fewest words, the Six Miracles approved of by the Church: four for his Beatification, and two for his Canonization.

Joseph Santorelli, of Caposele, where Saint Gerard had died, was at death's door from fever. The doctors gave up all hope, and he had received the last Sacraments. All preparations were made for his death, and the priest was recommending his soul to God. It was then that his brother put a picture of the Venerable Servant of God on the head of the dying man, and went to the church, where reposed the body of our Saint, and there prayed with confidence. Joseph was cured immediately and perfectly and was thus given back to his wife and numerous family by the servant of God. This occurred in the year 1823.

The Second Miracle was the cure of Teresa Deheneffe, of the diocese of Malines, in Belgium, in the year 1852. Nearly three years before, a relation stabbed her, but she kept her wound secret to save the good name of him who inflicted it. The wound through thus neglecting it, became fistulous, and when at last she consulted a surgeon, he declared it incurable. She made a novena to our Saint, who healed the incurable wound so perfectly that not even a scar remained.

In 1850, Ursula Tolèto, of Francavilla Fontana, in Reglia, was dying of cancer on the forehead. A picture of Venerable Gerard was applied to the diseased parts. The cancer detached itself from the forehead, and Ursula was perfectly cured.

Again, in the August of 1867, Laurence Riola, of St. Georgio, Montagna, in the archdiocese of Benevento, had come to the brink of the grave from a complication of diseases. He had read the Life of Venerable Gerard, and had recourse to him, with the effect that he was suddenly and perfectly cured.

After the usual most rigorous examination by the sacred Congregation of Rites, these four miracles were approved of by Leo XIII., on the feast of Our Lady, March 25th, 1892, and the Beatification of the Venerable Brother took place on January 29th, 1893.

In August, 1893, Valeria Baerts of Saint Trond, in the Diocese of Liege in Belgium, was dying. She had reached the last stage of malignant fever accompanied with meningitis. She had all the signs of approach-

ing dissolution and the doctors were waiting for the end, which, they said, was very near. It was in this extremity that Valeria's mother applied a relic of Saint Gerard and begged him to cure her daughter. The answer was immediate, and when the doctors returned to the room they found her perfectly cured.

The Sixth Miracle we will give in the words of the Decree: "The Second Miracle for canonization, happened in 1896. A young man, Vincent de Geronimo, aged fifteen, was studying in the Seminary of Compsano when he fell sick. As the sickness increased daily the young man's danger became extreme. The skill, diligence, and assiduity of the doctors, even the most skilled, were of no avail in giving him any alleviation; all the symptoms, indeed, of a fatal malady showed that death was certain. The sacred relics of Blessed Gerard were laid on the breast of the sufferer, and, having gone to sleep immediately, the sick young man, wondrous to relate, awoke perfectly cured.

These two miracles, like the other four,

having been examined with the usual rigor, were approved by His Holiness Pius X., on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, August 15th, 1904. The Solemn Canonization, by the same Supreme Pontiff, took place in St. Peter's, on December 11th, being the Sunday within the Octave of the Immaculate Conception. We are indebted in a special manner to three great Popes for the honor conferred on this humble lay-brother. Pius IX. introduced his cause, making him thereby *Venerable*, and, also, solemnly declared the heroicity of his virtues. Leo XIII., approved of the first four of the miracles given above and placed him amongst the number of the Beatified. Our present Holy Father, having approved of the last two miracles, enrolled him on the catalogue of the Church's Saints.

Saint Gerard pray for us!

It is interesting to note some of the circumstances of cures operated by Saint Gerard. He appeared in sleep to Brother Conrad Stuijmeel in Holland, who awoke, overflowing with joy completely cured.

A little Neapolitan boy was very ill. Dur-

ing his illness the Saint appeared to him, and, in surprise, the little boy cried out: "Mamma, Mamma, behold Brother Gerard! Look, see how beautiful he is, he is like the sun! Mamma, get up. Come and see Brother Gerard. Oh, he is gone!" but he did not go without curing his little client.

On another occasion, Agatha Flavia, a child of two years and three months, also exclaimed: "See Brother Gerard! See Brother Gerard" and she was immediately cured of a cough which had been wont to bring on convulsions.

A boy, named Joseph Dorsi, was also favored by an apparition of the Saint, after which he cried out: "I wish to get up; I am cured; Brother Gerard came here, he stood near my bed, he put his hand on my head, and said to me: '*You are well, you are well, you are well,*' and then disappeared."

Some were cured by his relics, some by the dust from his tomb, some by the touch of his very picture. We read that one is cured at the very first prayer, another at the end of a novena, a third has to make several novenas. In fact, the ways of hav-

ing recourse to our Saint are very numerous, and each one will do well to follow the way which grace suggests to him. Now, we will reproduce some recent favors of a different kind, which are in keeping with the miracles worked during his life.

The following account was given by Edmund Tembly, a seaman, to the Rev. F. Lamontagne, C. SS. R.:—

"Last year, on October 10th, Rev. Father, you gave me a picture of Blessed Gerard, telling me to keep it in my schooner, and to invoke him when in danger. With little interest in the matter I fixed it in my cabin. On the 25th of the same month a furious tempest forced me to take refuge in the port of Bic-Mien; but to reach the quay was impossible. So violent was the storm that all efforts to direct the vessel were useless. I had to haul in all sails and throw out both anchors.

"While in this almost hopeless position, another schooner, unmanageable like my own, was making straight for us. Both, having dragged their anchors, were on the point of dashing, first against each other and

then upon a rock. Wreck was imminent. At that moment I said to my companions: 'I have a picture of Blessed Gerard. If this good brother has power with God, now is his time to help us.' We all together prayed to him. Our prayer was not yet finished when suddenly the storm ceased, and so great was the calm that we had to make use of the oars and poles to get alongside the quay.

"But — wonderful to relate — our vessel had no sooner been placed in security than the storm recommenced, and continued to blow even more violently than before till the next morning.

"But for Blessed Gerard the schooners and our lives too would certainly have been lost."

"A carrier, living near Liege, in Belgium, was dependent for support on his horse. The horse was seized with violent colic and the Veterinary Surgeon gave him two hours to live. A neighbor recommended his wife to have recourse to Blessed Gerard. She went to her room, and with great confidence prayed to the holy Brother to help them.

When she returned to the stable the horse was quite well."

Amongst the miracles for the Beatification of our Saint, we also read the following, performed in St. Georgio la Montagna: —

It is a small town with about 3,000 inhabitants, and amongst these Blessed Gerard had many devout clients. A young priest, full of zeal, instituted an association for young men under the protection of Blessed Gerard. The associates are known as "The Gerards," and they profess to imitate the virtues of their Patron. Their devotion to their dear Beato has merited for them a heavenly visit.

There lived in the town a butcher named Michael de Sporito. On July 17th, 1901, he began to spit blood, and the care of the local physicians was unavailing. He went to Naples to consult the most distinguished medical man there. He had for his pains the blunt declaration — "My good friend, get home as soon as possible, put your affairs in order, for at very most you have but ten days of life before you."

We can imagine his thoughts on his way

sician, who had deigned to visit their humble abode and give them such a touching proof of his charity. From that moment Michael enjoyed, and enjoys to-day, good health.

On another occasion a widow came on pilgrimage to Blessed Gerard in Saint Trond. She had a son and daughter. The son was the bread winner of the family and an excellent young man. He caught a cold which went to his chest. Hence a terrible cough and then spitting of blood. He had to keep to the house, and the doctor, after four visits, declared that he was in consumption and that there was no curing him. This news was like a death blow to all three. It was then they began the nine Mondays in honor of Blessed Gerard. The mother prayed at home, and the sister went to St. Trond to assist at the Mass celebrated on Mondays in honor of the holy Brother. When she had heard the Mass, she would stay on near to the statue of Blessed Gerard, which was on a column, and when there were few people in the church, she used to go round the column

on her knees begging Blessed Gerard to hear her prayers. How could he be deaf to the supplications of the widow-mother and the devoted sister? He could not. He did not wait until the end of the Novena. On the third Monday, the young man was seized with coughing worse than ever. It was the farewell of the consumption, for from that day he coughed no more and was able to resume his work. Three days after the doctor visited him. He examined him. He found no trace of the disease. "What has happened?" he asked. "This is wonderful. It is a miracle. The young man has nothing the matter with him. He is cured. I cannot explain by ordinary laws this cure so sudden and so complete." It was on the 29th of July, 1901, that the sister attested this wonderful cure of her brother.

Gerard loved and cured the little children during his life on earth; he does so now from heaven.

A little boy of seven, living at Looz, in Limburg, was wasting away, a prey to consumption. As his stomach refused to retain

any food, the doctor declared his death could not be far off. His mother had his name then inscribed in the Association of Blessed Gerard, and began the devotion of receiving Holy Communion and hearing Mass on nine consecutive Mondays in his honor. Her confidence had its reward, for, on returning home from the seventh Mass, her little boy, who, contrary to all expectations, still lived on, asked for something to eat. From that day he went on eating and growing strong, and on the ninth Monday he accompanied his mother to Mass to thank Blessed Gerard.

In 1897, a mother made the following declaration: "My Son, eight years old, was attacked by inflammation of the lungs and of the brain. On the 13th of May, 1897, he had a fit of convulsions which lasted two hours. Afterwards he had others, one of which lasted from one o'clock till seven. The doctor gave him two hours to live, and, indeed, the child had all the symptoms of approaching death. His eyes were sunken, his hands and feet cold and black. We then had recourse to Blessed Gerard, and

we at once observed that he became conscious; afterwards, however, came a crisis from which there seemed no escape. I then placed a relic of Blessed Gerard on his bosom, and immediately he fell asleep. When the doctor came next day he declared him out of all danger. On the eighth day of our novena he got up perfectly cured."

On Saturday, May 29th, 1897, Godfrey Grosse, a child of nine, was run over by a tramcar in the Rue de Guillemins, Liege. On being taken up he was found covered with blood. A doctor was called immediately. He declared that, serious as were the external wounds, they were, in comparison with the internal injuries, slight indeed. He said that the brain was affected, and that, if hemorrhage were to come on, the child's life would be in great danger. The most effective remedies were used; but soon the dreaded symptoms appeared—an abundant vomiting of blood commenced and continued the whole of Saturday, Sunday and Monday morning. On Monday a person was sent to assist at the Mass of Blessed Gerard. After the Mass she got his relic.

On her return she gave it to the child. He seized it and murmured in a feeble voice: "Little Gerard cure me!" These were the first words he had spoken, and all were astonished at them. The father and mother continued praying, and as they did so, the hemorrhage suddenly ceased, and the boy, awakening out of his drowsy state, asked for something to eat. His mother gave him a little. In a few minutes he asked for more, and said he would get up—that he was cured. To the amazement of all, as if he had never received an injury, he rose from his bed. Father, mother and child were at Blessed Gerard's Mass on the Monday following, to thank their great benefactor.

We can readily believe that one who is easily induced to cure children, will gladly hear the prayers of children for their mother. Here is an example:

In 1897, a mother who had been a long time sick sent her four children to the neighboring church, to make a novena to Blessed Gerard for her recovery. On the ninth day she rose from her bed perfectly

cured. Her parish priest who used to visit her every day, could scarcely believe his eyes. She had Solemn High Mass celebrated in thanksgiving.

A lady in the Parish of Saint Remy was in a condition which, humanely speaking, meant death for herself and her child. All efforts of the medical art had failed on no less than eleven occasions, and now those who attended her were waiting for what seemed her certain death. In the meantime, one of her relatives went to the church and made a vow to go to the Mass of Blessed Gerard on nine consecutive Mondays. Wonderful to relate!—the favor was granted at the very instant that she made the vow. She found to her great joy both mother and child doing well.

The favors obtained through the intercession of this holy Redemptorist Brother in various parts of the United States, are almost incalculable. Let us give one instance. In 1893 in New Orleans a little girl, named Rita, was perfectly cured of a disease of the kidneys which had baffled all medical skill, and which would soon

have consigned her to an early grave, by making a novena to Blessed Gerard. She has ever since enjoyed the best of health. The mothers who have had a safe delivery through his intercession, notwithstanding many unfavorable symptoms, are counted by the thousands in our large cities.

Nor was our Saint less active in bestowing spiritual favors. The following is the history of his conversion, told by a Liege man in 1896:—

I heard so many proclaim the signal favors granted through the intercession of Blessed Gerard, that I resolved to address myself to him for a favor which I had much at heart. But I was conscious how unworthy I was to obtain it, for I had neglected all my religious duties for years. I, therefore, commenced by seeking reconciliation with God. I went on Monday to Mass—a practice long since omitted by me—and I received the Sacraments. Blessed Gerard heard me, and obtained me much more than I had desired. I received the favor I had so much at heart, and with it an interior happiness which I hope to preserve to the end of my days.

For twenty-five years a young man in Antwerp had been the desolation and dishonor of a very respectable Catholic family. He had neglected all his religious duties, and was a scandal to those who knew him. He fell ill. The family turned to Blessed Gerard for help, and began a novena. They did not call on Gerard in vain. The hard heart of the poor sinner softened little by little. On the eighth day he, of his own accord, asked for a priest, and received the sacraments with a lively faith and sincere contrition. The family seeing him in such good dispositions, began a second novena, to obtain for him, through Blessed Gerard, a happy death. The fortunate convert received with thankfulness several visits from the priest, and in three days he piously gave up his repentant soul to his Creator.

Here is an instance of a double conversion wrought by Saint Gerard:—

“A woman of Liege had entirely neglected all practices of religion for years, and had made her home a hell upon earth for herself and her husband. Both found themselves in the greatest temporal misery for

want of work. Her neighbors, moved by her misery, said to her: 'Why do you not pray to Blessed Gerard, as we do?' One Monday she, by chance, entered the church for the Mass, prayed with fervor, and, when Mass was over, wished to return home; but she felt herself held there as if by an invisible force; it was the moment of grace. She saw a confessional; she moved towards it, then drew back through fear; at last conquered by an irresistible impulse, she entered and fell on her knees. The very first words of the confessor gave her confidence; she made her confession, and returned home overflowing with happiness. Scarcely had she entered, when a young girl came and said to her: 'Is it true that your husband has no work?' 'Alas! it is, my child.' 'Well, then, send him to the address which I give you, and he will get work.' The husband, rejoiced at the good news, went quickly to the house indicated. 'You can work here as long as you do not find work elsewhere, and I will see that you are well paid,' said the master to him. The workman, touched by the goodness of Provi-

dence in his regard, returned to God by a good confession. His wife and he have now a happy home. They cease not to thank Blessed Gerard, and to glorify him before the people."

Penitents give permission to publish everywhere the graces they received through the intercession of our Saint. Nevertheless, we think it better to mention the country only, and not the locality where they occurred.

Quite recently, in Ireland, a man who had been away from his duty for years, came to a priest and said: "Father, I had no intention of coming to confession, but yesterday my wife bought a little life of Blessed Gerard (it was the first edition of this book). I read it through, and whilst reading it I felt inspired to go to confession, and I found no peace all last night or to-day, and that is why I am here now."

In a certain parish in Ireland, there was a man who had been away for years from the Sacraments, and who had reduced himself almost to madness by excessive drink. His wife told the sad story to the priest.

"Begin at once", said he, "a novena to Blessed Gerard, and get your little ones to join in it." She did so. During the novena her husband suddenly gave up drink; on the next day he went to confession, and on the last day of the novena he received Holy Communion.

A short time ago, during a mission in Ireland, a young woman came to confession the first week. This only added a new sacrilege to those she had been committing for years. A few days later a missionary recommended all who wished to make a good confession to have recourse to Blessed Gerard. She was listening. She got the little Life of Blessed Gerard, read it, and began to pray to him. From that moment she could find no rest. She returned to the same Father, saying: "*O Father, but for Blessed Gerard, I should be concealing mortal sins all my life. He has not let me sleep a wink since I began to pray to him.*" Helped by Blessed Gerard she then made a good confession. When it was over she asked the missionary to proclaim everywhere the wonderful grace she had obtained through Blessed Gerard.

In Belgium there were two most striking conversions in 1897: the one of a person who had not crossed the threshold of a church for fifty-three years; the other of a sacrilegious sinner of fifty-nine years standing. The latter not only gave permission to speak of her case, but begged that it might be made public. She was seventy years of age. She threw herself on her knees in the confessional as if she were lost. Trembling all over she said: "Father, they tell me you are so good; I have taken courage and come to you. It is Blessed Gerard that has brought me. I have been praying to him, and for a whole fortnight I have not been able to close an eye. Father, help me. Ask me questions on all the Commandments. It is more than fifty-nine years since I began keeping back my sins through fear, and to live in sacrilege. I was then eleven. My first communion was a bad one. Father, have pity on me, for it is Blessed Gerard who has sent me to you." When her confession was over, she repeated again and again, while floods of tears rolled down her cheeks: "Father, thank Blessed

Gerard for me. Won't you promise that you will thank him for me? Tell wherever you go, that it is a poor soul that has been the slave of sin for fifty-nine years, that publicly thanks him. Preach everywhere that all who fear to confess their sins should have recourse to Blessed Gerard. Oh, how happy he has made me to-day! I am 70, and it is only to-morrow I make my first good Communion." And as she left the confessional, she exclaimed aloud: "*Oh, the good Saint Gerard! Oh, the good Saint Gerard!*"

On the eve of the Feast of the Blessed Gerard, 1898, a young man presented himself in the confessional and asked to make a general confession. When the confessor asked the reasons why he wished to make a general confession, he said that there were sins which he had never confessed, but that he had made a novena to Blessed Gerard to help him, and that now he was resolved to tell everything. He then began his confession, and told everything without the slightest fear or nervousness. He had never made a good confession nor received worth-

ily Holy Communion. Thanks to the grace which Blessed Gerard obtained for him from God, the confessor had no difficulty in giving him absolution, and thus sent him away happy and the friend of God. He begged that this favor received from the Patron of a Good Confession should be made public, and he was willing, even, to make known his name and to give his address. It will be enough for us to write that the grace was granted in Ireland.

On the same day a woman went to confession, she had long been away from God, and had despaired of His mercy. She thought her offences were such that He would never pardon her. Externally she gave no scandal. She even pretended that she went to her duty rather than give disedification; but in reality she neither confessed her sins nor received Holy Communion. She was in this state of despair, when she heard accidentally in a friend's house that Blessed Gerard obtained for sinners the grace to make a good confession. She resolved to pray to him to obtain for her God's mercy; she made a novena. Her

prayer was heard. Blessed Gerard obtained for her the grace to make a good confession, and she left the confessional quite happy and full of joy and confidence in God. She wishes that others should know of the great grace which she received from Blessed Gerard, the Patron of a Good Confession.

IV. DEVOTIONS TO SAINT GERARD.

1. Imitate his virtues. These we have given in the Second Chapter.

2. Give alms to the poor—temporal, if you can; spiritual, by your prayers for others. During a novena in honor of St. Gerard, in the Redemptorist Church, at Antwerp, the offerings made for *Saint Gerard's Bread* enabled the Fathers to give 1000 loaves to the poor.

3. Prepare well for his Feast, October 16th. Make the Triduo, or Novena, or Nine Mondays in his honor. During one Novena, at Antwerp, there were 4,900 communions, and at Saint Trond the number was 5,500. Assist also at Mass, in honor of St. Gerard, especially on Mondays; and get children to choose him as Patron of First Communion. (It is well to promise St. Gerard, when you want a special favor, that you will publish it in his honor, and to spread devotion to him.)

4. Choose him yourself, and get others to choose him, as *Patron of a Good Confession*.

PRAYER TO SAINT GERARD FOR A GOOD
CONFESSION.

O Great Patron of a Good Confession, Saint Gerard! O thou who didst give courage to souls whom fear and shame had overcome! O thou who didst make known to poor sinners the sins wilfully concealed from the minister of God! O thou who didst give sorrow to their hearts, resolution to their will, truth to their lips, help me! I wish to make a good confession. If there be any mortal sin which, through my own fault, I have not confessed, bring it clearly before my mind and help me to confess it. Aid me to know my sins. Obtain for me true sorrow for them, and a firm purpose never to offend God again by any mortal sin. And when I am kneeling in the confessional, be with me, helping me to tell all my sins in spite of fear or shame. O Saint Gerard, in thy hands I place this confession! Be thou to me what thou wast to another

poor soul, "an angel of God sent to deliver me from hell". Amen.

An Act of ATTRITION may be made thus:

"My God, because by my sins I have lost Heaven and deserved Hell for eternity, I am sorry above all things for having offended Thee, and I firmly purpose nevermore to offend Thee by a mortal sin."

(*St. Alphonsus.*)

An Act of PERFECT CONTRITION may be made as follows:

"My God, because Thou art infinitely good, I love Thee above all things; and because I love Thee, I am sorry above all things for all the offences I have committed against Thee, O Sovereign Good. My God, I purpose nevermore to offend Thee. I wish to die rather than offend Thee again by mortal sin."

(*St. Alphonsus.*)

NOVENA TO SAINT GERARD.

Strive each day to exercise yourself in the virtue indicated in the petition.

1ST DAY.—Saint Gerard, *ever full of faith*, obtain for me that, believing firmly all that

the Church of God proposes to my belief, I may strive to secure through a holy life the joys of eternal happiness. *Nine Hail Marys.*

V. Pray for us, O Saint Gerard.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let Us Pray.

O Almighty and Everlasting God, who didst draw to Thyself Saint Gerard, even from his tenderest years, making him conformable to the Image of Thy Crucified Son, grant, we beseech Thee, that, imitating his example, we may be made like unto the same Divine Image, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

2ND DAY.—Saint Gerard, *most generous saint*, who from thy tenderest years didst care so little for the goods of earth, obtain for me that I may place all my confidence in Jesus Christ alone, my true Treasure, who alone can make me happy in time and in eternity. *Nine Hail Marys, with V. and Prayer as on 1st Day.*

3RD DAY.—Saint Gerard, *bright seraph of love*, who, despising all earthly love,

didst consecrate thy life to the service of God and thy neighbor, promoting God's glory in thy lowly state, and ever ready to succor the distressed and console the sorrowful, obtain for me that, loving God, my only Good, and my neighbor for His sake, I may be hereafter united to Him for ever in glory. *Nine Hail Marys, etc., as on 1st Day.*

4TH DAY.—Saint Gerard, *spotless lily of purity*, by thy angelic virtue and thy wondrous innocence of life thou didst receive from the Infant Jesus and His Immaculate Mother sweet pledges of tenderest love, grant that I may ever strive manfully in my life-long fight, and thus win the crown that awaits the brave and the true. *Nine Hail Marys, etc., as on 1st Day.*

5TH DAY.—Saint Gerard, *model of holy obedience*, who throughout thy life didst most heroically submit thy judgment to those who represented Jesus Christ to thee, thus sanctifying thy lowliest acts, obtain for me from God cheerful submission to His holy will and the virtue of perfect obedience, that I may be made conformable to

Jesus, my Model, who was obedient even to death. *Nine Hail Marys, etc., as on 1st Day.*

6TH DAY. — Saint Gerard, *most perfect imitator of Jesus Our Redeemer*, do thou, whose greatest glory was to be humble and lowly, obtain, that I, too, knowing my littleness in God's sight, may be found worthy to enter the kingdom that is promised to the humble and lowly of heart. *Nine Hail Marys, etc., as on 1st Day.*

7TH DAY. — Saint Gerard, *unconquered hero, most patient in suffering*, do thou, who didst glory in infirmity, and under slander and most cruel ignominy didst rejoice to suffer with Christ, obtain for me patience and resignation in my sorrows, that I may bravely bear the cross that is to gain for me the crown of everlasting glory. *Nine Hail Marys, etc., as on 1st Day.*

8TH DAY. — Saint Gerard, *true lover of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar*, do thou, who didst kneel long hours before the Tabernacle, and there didst taste the joys of Paradise, obtain for me the spirit of prayer and an undying love for the Most

Holy Sacrament, that thus, receiving frequently the Body and Blood of Jesus, I may daily grow in His holy love and merit the priceless grace of loving Him even to the end. *Nine Hail Marys, etc., as on 1st Day.*

9TH DAY. — Saint Gerard, *most favored child of heaven*, to whom Mary gave the Infant Jesus in the days of thy childhood, to whom she sweetly came before thou didst close thy eyes in death, obtain for me so to seek and love my Blessed Mother during life, that she may be my joy and consolation in this valley of tears, until with thee, before the throne of God, I may praise her goodness for all eternity. Amen. Amen.

So I hope, so may it be. *Nine Hail Marys, etc., as on 1st Day.*

ANOTHER NOVENA TO ST. GERARD MAJELLA, C. SS. R.

Asking a favor.

O Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I, Your lowly creature, thank You for the graces and favors granted to St. Gerard, especially for the virtues with which You adorned him in life, and for the

glory You gave him in heaven: Wherefore, O Lord, having showered favors on him for the edification of Holy Church, and glorified him before men, grant me by his merits, united to those of Jesus Christ and Holy Mary, the grace of

And thou, my powerful advocate, always so charitable to all, intercede for me. Prostrate thyself before the throne of the divine mercy, and depart not thence till thou hast obtained for me this favor. I place my great and urgent need in thy hands; ponder over it, and obtain that this novena may not terminate until I shall, in some manner, begin to feel the effects of thy patronage. Amen.

Three Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glorias.



ST. GERARD'S ACT OF LOVE.

O my God, I wish I could make as many acts of love of Thee, as the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints have made from the first moment of their existence, and as all the faithful on earth have made since the creation. I wish I could love Thee with the love with which Jesus loves Thee, and with which the elect love Thee. I wish I could repeat all these acts of love at every instant of my life. The same affections I offer to my beloved Mother Mary.

ST. GERARD'S MAXIMS.

1. Let us fulfil all our duties, even the most insignificant, most punctually, otherwise we risk falling into grievous sins; for, if we are careless in committing little faults, God may punish us by allowing us to fall into great sins. David, who was a man after God's heart, is a proof of this.

2. Obedience to my superiors must be my guide to Paradise. The will of God and the will of my superior are one and the same thing.

3. The love of God cannot enter a soul, so long as the body is too well treated.
4. O will of God, how happy is he who understands how to wish only what God wills.
5. To suffer, but not for God, is an infinite torment. But to suffer every thing, and to suffer it for God, is nothing (that is, is not painful).
6. To brood over troubles brings no profit, for it proceeds from the devil who is trying to rob us of our time.
7. My business is to do God's holy will.
8. Let us carefully avoid whatever may excite others to impatience.

ST. GERARD'S PRAYER,

WHEN VISITING THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

O my Lord, I believe that Thou art present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I adore Thee with my whole heart, and intend by this visit to adore Thee in all the places in which Thou art present in the Blessed Sacrament. I offer Thee Thy most precious blood for all poor sinners. I long to receive Thee spiritually wherever Thou art sacramentally present.

PRAYER TO ST. GERARD.

St. Gerard, drawn by the irresistible charms and the immense love of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, thou didst delight to dwell near His tabernacle, and didst choose it as thy place of rest, as if saying: "Lord, it is good for me to be here." There thou wast wont to spend many hours both by day and by night. There thou didst find the heavenly food, after which thou didst hunger, and the divine lights which enabled thee to see God in all things and all things in God. There thou didst find consolation and strength in times of trial, and a supernatural contentment amid bitter privations. After thy example, and aided by thy prayers, O holy Brother, I will henceforth go to Jesus in the tabernacle as to my true and only friend. Obtain for me the grace to receive from Him counsel in doubt, remedy in illness, strength in temptation, consolation in sufferings and trials. St. Gerard, help me to know, to pray to, and to love Jesus Christ in the most Holy Sacrament. Amen.

LITANY

IN HONOR OF ST. GERARD MAJELLA.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Jesus, hear us.

Jesus, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven,

Have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

*Have, etc.*God the Holy Ghost, *Have, etc.*Holy Trinity, one God, *Have, etc.*

Holy Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help,

St. Joseph, foster-father of Christ,

St. Alphonsus, founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer,

St. Gerard, enriched with extraordinary graces from early youth,

St. Gerard, perfect model of a faithful servant,

St. Gerard, bright pattern of the working class,

St. Gerard, seraph of love towards the Blessed Sacrament,

Pray for us.

St. Gerard, living image of the crucified Saviour,

St. Gerard, zealous client of the Immaculate Virgin Mary,

St. Gerard, bright mirror of innocence and penance,

St. Gerard, admirable model of heroic obedience,

St. Gerard, silent sufferer under ignominious calumny,

St. Gerard, great before God by thy deep humility,

St. Gerard, truly wise by thy childlike simplicity,

St. Gerard, supernaturally enlightened in divine mysteries,

St. Gerard, solely solicitous about the pleasure of God,

St. Gerard, indefatigably zealous for the conversion of sinners,

St. Gerard, wise counsellor in the choice of a vocation,

St. Gerard, enlightened guide in the direction of souls,

St. Gerard, loving help of the poor and afflicted,

Pray for us.

St. Gerard, wondrous patron of un-
 baptized children,
 St. Gerard, compassionate intercessor
 in every necessity,
 St. Gerard, honor and glory of the
 Order of Redemptorists,
 Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of
 the world! *Spare us, O Lord.*
 Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of
 the world! *Graciously hear us, O Lord.*
 Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of
 the world! *Have mercy on us!*
 Pray for us, St. Gerard,
 That we may be made worthy of the prom-
 ises of Christ.

Pray for us.

LET US PRAY.

(Prayer of the Church.)

O God, Who wast pleased to draw to
 Thyself the Blessed Gerard from his youth,
 and to render him conformable to the image
 of Thy crucified Son, grant, we beseech
 Thee, that following his example we may
 be transformed into the self-same image.
 Through the same Christ, our Lord.—
 Amen.

home to his wife and numerous family. He was sitting one day before his door when a pious woman, Rosario Batteglieri, asked him as she passed, how he was. "It is always the same," he replied, "there is no question of cure for me, my sentence has been passed." "Why, then," said Rosario, "do you not have recourse to the saint who consoles and helps everyone?" She meant Blessed Gerard, in whom she had unbounded confidence. She seems to have communicated her confidence to the dying man. He began to pray, and with a conviction that he would obtain his cure.

He dragged on till the night of December 16th. He was in bed awake and praying to his dear Gerard, when all on a sudden a stranger entered the room, whose appearance, far from frightening him, filled him with consolation. It was no other than Blessed Gerard himself, who deigned to visit him. The poor man, dumb with astonishment, could only look at him and follow his movements. The dear Saint came near his bed, turned back the clothes and uncovered his chest. He gave him the

cross to kiss three separate times. Then with his most pure hands he touched the diseased parts just as doctors do. He then gave him the crucifix to kiss again, replaced the clothes, and said to Michael—"Behold, now you are cured," and he left by the door. It was only then the power of speech seemed to have returned to Michael, and he gave expression to the thought uppermost in his mind. "Dear Brother Gerard," he cried out, "Dear Brother Gerard, cure me, I pray you, I have children to support."

His cry roused his wife, who asked him what was the matter. He told her all, and while telling—O, wonder! he perceived that the bandages which had been passed round his chest three or four times, and pinned, were no longer there. Michael asked his wife, had she taken them off. "No, no," she said. She looked for them high and low, but could not find them. Michael got up, and after much searching he found the bandages at the foot of the bed nicely folded. There was now no doubt, and the happy couple burst into tears, but tears of joy, blessing and thanking their heavenly phy-